Mark Lane on Good Morning America, Tuesday, May 3, 1977 (first hour)

David Hartman: Yesterday at this time we were talking with Mark Lane and we saw part of his interview with James Earl Ray. Mr. Ray is now serving a life sentence after pleading guilty to the murder of the Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. Mr. Ray has since tried to withdraw that plea. Even in the beginning he said that others were in it with him. Yesterday we heard Mr. Ray say 3 more provocative things: one, that his confession was coerced, two, that he was no where near the area when the shot was fired, and he claimed that he had evidence linking his partner--a man named Raoul--to the intelligence community. Mark Lane is ~~the~~ lawyer who investigated the death of President Kennedy. He called the Warren Commission Report a whitewash, and now he's done a similar investigation into the death of Martin Luther King and he's written a book about it called Code Name Zorro and this morning Mr. Lane is in Washington with Steve Bell. Good morning Mr. Lane.

Lane: Good Morning.

DH: You said yesterday--the last thing you said was that you were convinced there was a conspiracy in this case, in the killing of Martin Luther King. Who were the conspirators?

ML: I don't think all of the evidence is in yet. Fortunately there is a responsible committee of Congress, the Select Committee on Assassinations, which is conducting an investigation. I would say based upon all of the available evidence, the documentary evidence and eyewitness testimony, one would have to conclude that the evidence leads to the inexorable conclusion, uh, that the, that employees and officials of the Federal Bureau of Investigation must be considered to be prime suspects in the murder of Dr. King.

DH: Do you have any names?

ML: No, it's just a whole series of circumstances in term of the moving around of witnesses, the removal of police officers. Mr. Hoover, of course we know wanted Dr. King dead. That's why he had a letter sent to him indicating to Dr. King that He's better commit suicide within 34 days. Mr. Hoover did that, not Mr. Ray.

Steve Bell: That's a very broad accusation, though.

ML: Which is?

SB: That the Federal Bureau of Investigation is behind this.

ML: No, I didn't say that though, did I.

SB: Or that people in the Federal Bureau of Investigation....

ML: I said that they must be considered to be prime suspects...

SB: Prime suspects. On what basis?

ML: On what basis? Well, uh...

DH: Maybe I can help out here. Let's go point by point. You've got a model there, Mr. , uh, Lane. The government said that Ray acted alone, that he came into Memphis that day alone and shot King. You dispute that. Why?

ML: A number of things. First of all it was said that Ray quickly came into Memphis, looked around, moved into a room in a rooming house which had an excellent view of the Lorraine Motel where Dr. King was staying. However, if you look at South Main St., which is where the rooming house is, you see that in order to go into the rooming house you go into this room here, into ~~an~~ the entrance here, and when you get into the entrance here, this building has no view whatever of the Lorraine Motel because of this massive forrest. From the Lorraine Motel you cannot even see this building; from this building you cannot ~~xx~~ even see the Lorraine Motel. You have to be somewhat aware of the intrinsic structure of the interior of the building to realize

that by going in here you can go upstairs, go this way, and then ~~[illegible]~~ through a little jerry-built extension drop down 2 feet, get into this building, and then go all the way to the rear to this bathroom, a d from this bathroom window you do have a view of the Lorraine Motel. The question is how did Ray know all of that in advance. You cannot tell that from the outside of the building, without question.

SB: Well, Mr. Lane, I went into that apartment building within hours after the shooting and looked out that window and all you have to do is walk in. It says that he took a room in the roominghouse and that this is still part of the roominghouse.

ML: Yes. You knew that but no one could know that unless you got in the building.

SB: Unless you went in and staked it out having...

ML: Ah, but the FBI says he didn't. He just arrived there at 4 o'clock that day. He didn't stake it out in advance. How did he know that by entering this building which says rooms you wind up in ~~[illegible]~~ another building which doesn't say rooms, which merely says Jim's dinner, and this building is connected with this building. That's one of the questions which I think remains unresolved.

Ray has an explanation. He reported to Jim's dinner where he met Raoul. Raoul said go next door and register, and when he did, uh, Raoul and Ray together enterred the room.

SB: But this still doesn't bring anybody involving the agency.

ML: No, no. We didn't have to deal with that question yet.

SB: Alright, let's...

DH: Who was Ed Redditt?

ML: Who was Ed. Redditt. Ed Redditt was a ~~[illegible]~~ police officer in charge of security for Dr. King. He was a black detective who was given the assignment at the request of Revenend Billy Kyles, Dr. King's host that day, who asked that Redditt, the one black police officer ~~[illegible]~~ they felt they could trust, should be in charge. Instead of 10 or 12 FB, uh, local police officers provided for security, they reduced it to 2--Ed Redditt and Willie B. Richmond. And Redditt was staked out over here with Richmond at the fire station, and it was Redditt's plan that if anything would happen, any--a shot or anything of that nature, Richmond would from here charge in toward the Lorraine Motel where Dr. King was, Redditt would run through the fire station, would come down here, and ~~[illegible]~~ try to seal off South Main St. Had that happened, had Redditt been there, very likely he would have seen someone leaving this building with a rifle in his hand. But Redditt was removed 2 hours before the assassination because a man named Frank Holloman, who was the only man ever to have been the director of both the, the Memphis fire and police department, had first of all removed the firemen from this area, who were black, the night before, and two hours before Dr. King was killed Holloman called Redditt into his office and said "We have, er, information from this Secret Service agent from Washington DC who's just flown down here that there's a contract out on your life. Therefore you must go to the Rivermont Holiday Inn. We're keeping you there." Redditt refused and Redditt was taken home by 2 police officers and told to remain there and Redditt kept on saying I'm in charge of security; I must get back to the Lorraine Motel, and as he was arguing with police officers in front of his house in his car he heard the radio broadcast that Dr. King had been shot. And whoever did shoot him was able to leave the scene because the 2 police officers reduced from 12 to 2 had been reduced to one and the officer in charge had been removed by Mr. Holloman.

SB: You emphasize that Holloman was behind all this and Holloman was, of course, a former FBI agent and aide to...

ML: He was more than an agent.

SB: Yes, he was at the top...

ML: He was with the FBI's top official for ~~more than~~ 25 years, he was a special agent in charge of Memphis, Atlanta, and he was the chief inspector who personally ran Mr. Hoover's office here in Washington for 8 years.

MH: Mr., uh, Lane, what you're saying about the FBI comes, uh, comes perhaps dangerously close to libel. Are you concerned about that, the charges you're making at all?

ML: I'm very concerned about the charge that I've made. I've been talking about assassinations in this country for more than 13 years and I've never been sued by anyone. I think that the FBI has a responsibility to come forward, to make all of the evidence available. I think they will have to do that now that there's a select committee. Uh, I'm concerned about the truth in this case, and I've spoken about the truth in this case for some 9 years and about the truth regarding the death of President Kennedy for some 13 years and no one has ever sued me for anything that I've said.

MH: Mr. Lane, thank you very much for being with us both mornings.

ML: Thank you.

MH: Thank you, Steve.